

2017 Small Business Person of the Year Awards

SBA will make Small Business Person of the Year awards at the State level (from each of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands and Guam) and the National level to small business owners who represent the nation's strong entrepreneurial spirit and rich diversity. In those states served by more than one SBA district office, each district office will select a district level winner and the State winner will be selected at the regional level. The National Small Business Person of the Year is selected from the State level winners.

Who is eligible to be nominated for this award?

Any individual who owns and operates or who bears principal responsibility for operating a small business may be nominated. Partners who jointly own and operate a small business may be nominated as a "team," so long as the number of individuals in the team nomination does not exceed four. A nominee for Small Business Person of the Year must own or operate a business defined as "small" for its primary industry under the applicable SBA size standards. Individuals who have received the Small Business Person Award at the State level within the past five years are not eligible. Elected officials are not eligible. Nominees must also be residents of the United States or its territories. Nominees will be subject to background checks. Small businesses owned and operated by nominees must comply with federal civil rights laws. While receipt of SBA assistance is not required, it is preferred. Consult your nearest SBA district office if you have questions.

Who may submit nominations for this award?

Any individual or organization dedicated to the support of the small business community in the United States, including, but not limited to, trade and professional associations and business organizations, may submit nominations for the Small Business Person of the Year award. Individuals may self-nominate for this award. Individuals may not be nominated for more than one National Small Business Week 2016 award category. SBA employees may help to solicit nominations, but they cannot submit nominations on behalf of the nominee.

Where are the nominations to be sent?

Nominations must be submitted in one of two ways: to either:

1. Nominations may be submitted to the Mississippi Small Business Administration Branch Office:

**U.S. Small Business Administration
Gulfport Branch Office
Attn: Bridget Johnson Fells
2510 14th Street Suite 103
Gulfport, MS 39501
(228) 863-4449 ext. 225**

2. Nominations may be submitted via the online nominations portal at <http://awards.sba.gov>.

What is the deadline for nominations?

All nominations for Small Business Person of the Year submitted to the U.S. Small Business Administration district office in the state or territory where the nominee is located must be postmarked or hand delivered to the appropriate SBA Office **no later than 3:00pm ET, January 11, 2016.**

All nominations submitted through the online nominations portal must be uploaded and submitted **no later than 3:00pm ET, January 11, 2016.**

What information must the nomination package contain?

Nominations must contain the information required below. Incomplete nomination packages will not be considered. All evaluation/selection criteria must be specifically addressed.

1. A completed background form (SBA Form 3300, Award Nominee Background Form) which is available through SBA district offices and the online nominations portal. For “team” nominations, a background form is required for each team member;
2. A completed nomination form (SBA Form 3301, Small Business Person of the Year) which is available through SBA district offices and the online nominations portal;
3. An original 8” x 10” or 5” x 7” photo of the nominee or a digital photo – at least 300 dpi is required; photocopies are not acceptable. For “team” nominations, a photo of each nominee or group photo is acceptable;
4. Additional supporting documentation deemed significant by the nominator, including news clips, letters of recommendation, nomination letter (if not self-nominated) and other evidence of the appropriateness of the nomination (supporting documentation must not exceed 10 pages). Videos will not be considered.
5. Nominee’s full name, title, business addresses, telephone, fax numbers, e-mail address and the award for which the nomination is being made.
6. The nominator’s name, title, place of business, business address, telephone number and e-mail.
7. A one-paragraph description of the nominee’s business and/or professional occupation.
8. A brief biography of the nominee, not exceeding one page.
9. A business profile, not exceeding one page.
10. Four to five additional photos from the nominee’s company/organization, employees at work.

What are the evaluation/selection criteria for the Small Business Person of the Year award?

In evaluating the nomination packages, the judges will look at the following criteria:

- 1) Staying power — a substantiated history as an established business; including:
 - Number of years in business (minimum three years).
 - Sustained growth including but not limited to expansion, addition of territories, growth in square footage occupied, or web traffic.
- 2) Growth in number of employees — a benchmark to judge the impact of the business on the job market.
 - Sustained over a minimum of three years.
 - Increases over the three years must be in excess of growth in Gross National Product.
- 3) Increase in sales, net profit and net worth for calendar years 2012, 2013 and 2014.
- 4) Innovativeness of product or service offered — an illustration of the creativity and imagination of the nominee.
 - Specific description of uniqueness of product or service.
 - Explanation of how the product or service fits a niche not being adequately addressed by the competition.

5) Response to adversity — examples of problems faced in the nominee's business and the methods used to solve them, including:

- Specific description of financial, physical, legal or other crisis.
- Substantiation of the threat to the continuity of the business.
- Defined actions taken by the nominee to resolve the crisis.

6) Contributions to community-oriented projects — evidence of the use of his/her personal time and resources, including:

- Listing of specific contributions of money, time, or resources to charitable causes.
- Membership in councils, boards, and clubs providing support and services to the community.

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7) If applicable, a description of the products exported and markets served.

What are the selection procedures for this award?

Small Business Persons of the Year Award winners will be selected at the State and National levels.

1) In those states served by a single SBA district office, the district office will select the State winner.

2) In those states served by more than one SBA district office, each district office will select a district level winner and the State winner will be selected at the regional level. The region will select the State winner.

3) SBA districts that serve more than one state will send their top nominee for each state for a runoff decided by the SBA regional office. For example, if the SBA Richmond District Office and SBA Washington DC Metropolitan Area Office both select winners for Virginia, those awardees will compete to be the Virginia State Winner. The region will select the State winner.

Winners at each level will be selected by a panel of judges that may be comprised of both SBA employees and non-Federal employees. The National Small Business Person of the Year will be selected by the SBA Administrator based on, but not restricted to, the recommendations of the panel of judges of federal employees. The winner will be announced during National Small Business Week. Non-federal employees serving as judges must sign a conflict of interest/non-disclosure certification.